

Metre VII.

Habet omnis hoc voluptas.

VERY delyt hath this, that it anguisseth hem with prikkles that usen it. It resembleth to thise flyng flyes that we clepen been, that, after that he hath shad hise agreable honies, he fleeth away, and stingeth the hertes, of hem that ben ysmite, with bytinge overlonge holdinge.

Prose VIII.

Nihil igitur dubium est.

NOW is it no doute thanne that thise weyes ne ben a manner misledinges to blisfulnesse, ne that they ne mowe nat leden folk thider as they bihten to leden hem. But with how grete harmes thise forseide weyes ben enlaced, I shal shewe thee shortly. forwhy yif thou enforcest thee to assemble moneye, thou most bireven him his moneye that hath it. And yif thou wolt shynen with dignitees, thou most bisechen & supplien hem that yeven tho dignitees. And yif thou coveitest by honour to gon bifore other folk, thou shalt defoule thyself thorough humblesse of aringe. Yif thou desirest power, thou shalt by awaytes of thy subgits anoyously ben cast under manye periles. Akest thou glorie? Thou shalt ben so destrat by asprethinges that thou shalt forgoon sikernes. And yif thou wolt leden thy lyf in delices, every wight shal despisen thee and forleten thee, as thou that art thral to thing that is right foul & brotel; that is to seyn, servaunt to thy body. Now is it thanne wel seen, how litel & how brotel possessioun they coveiten, that putten the gooddes of the body aboven hir owne resoun. for mayst thou sormounten thise olifaunts in gretnesse or weight of body? Or mayst thou ben stronger than the bole? Mayst thou ben swifter than the tygre? Bihold the spaces and the stablenesse & the swifte cours of the hevne, and stint somtyme to wondren on foule thinges; the which hevne, certes, nis nat rather for thise thinges to ben wondred upon, than for the resoun by which it is governed. But the shyning of thy forme, that is to seyn, the beautee of thy body, how swiftly passinge is it, and how transitorie; certes, it is more flittinge than the mutabilitee of flowers of the somersesoun. for so Aristotle telleth, that yif that men hadden eyen of a beest that highte lynx, so that the lokinge of folk mighte percen

thorough the thinges that withstonden it, whoso loked thanne in the entrailes of the body of Alcibiades, that was fulfayr in the superface withoute, it shold seme right thy nature maketh nat that, but the deceivaunce of the feblesse of the eyen that as mochel as ever thee list; so that thou knowe algates that, whatso it be, that is to seyn, of the gooddes of thy body, which that thou wondrest upon, may ben destroyed or dissolved by the hete of a fevre of three dayes. Of alle whiche forseide thinges I may reducen this shortly in a somme, that thise worldly gooddes, whiche that ne mowen nat yeven that they bihten, ne ben nat parfit by the congregacioun of alle gooddes; that they ne ben nat weyes ne pathes that bringen men to blisfulnesse, ne maken men to ben blisful.

Metre VIII.

Eheu! quae miseros tramite devios.

ALAS! which folye and which ignoraunce misledeth mandringe wrecches fro the path of verray goodde! Certes, yene seken no gold in grene trees, ne ye ne gadere nat precious stones in the vyynes, ne ye ne hyden nat your ginnes in the hye mountaignes to cacchen fish of whiche ye may maken riche festes. And yif yow lyketh to hunte to roes, ye ne gon nat to the fordes of the water that highte Tyrene. And over this, men knowen wel the crykes and the cavernes of the see yhid in the flodes, and knowen eek which water is most plentivous of whyte perles, and knowen which water haboundeth most of rede purple, that is to seyn, of a manner shellefish with which men dyen purple; & knowen which strondes habounden most with tendre fishes, or of sharpe fishes that highten echines. But folk suffren hemself to ben so blinde, that hem ne reacheth nat to knowe where thilke gooddes ben yhid whiche that they coveiten, but ploungen hem in erthe & seken there thilke good that sormounteth the hevne that bereth the sterres. What preyere may I maken that bedigne to thenyee thoughtes of men? But I preye that they coveiten richesse and honours, so that, whan they han geten tho false gooddes with greet travaille, that therby they mowe knowen the verray gooddes.

Prose IX.

Actenus mendacis formam.

I SUFFYSETH that I have shewed hiderto the forme of false welefulnesse, so that, yif thou loke now cleerly, the order of myn entencion requireth from henneth forth to shewen thee the verray welefulnesse.

FOR sothe, quod I, I see wel now that suffisaunce may nat comen by riches, ne power by reames, ne reverence by dignitees, ne gentillesse by glorie, ne joye by delices. And hast thou wel known the causes, quod she, why it is?

CERTES, me semeth, quod I, that I see hem right as though it were thorough a litel clifte; but me were levere knowen hem more openly of thee. **C**ERTES, quod she, the resoun is al redy, for thilke thing that simply is o thing, withouten any devisioun, the error and folye of mankinde departeth and devydeh it, and misledeth it and transporteth from verray and parfit good to gooddes that ben false and unparfit. But seyme this. Menest thou that he, that hath nede of power, that him ne lakketh no thing? Nay, quod I.

CERTES, quod she, thou seyst a right, for yif so be that ther is a thing, that in any partye be febler of power, certes, as in that, it mot nedes ben nedy of foreine help. Right so is it, quod I.

SUFFISAUNCE & power ben thanne of o kinde? So semeth it, quod I. And demest thou, quod she, that a thing that is of this manere, that is to seyn, suffisaunt and mighty, oughte ben despysed, or elles that it be right digne of reverence aboven alle thinges? Certes, quod I, it nis no doute, that it is right worthy to ben revered.

AT us, quod she, adden thanne reverence to suffisaunce & to power, so that we demen that thise three thinges ben al o thing. Certes, quod I, lat us adden it, yif we wolen graunten the sothe.

WHAT demest thou thanne? quod she; is that a derk thing and nat noble, that is suffisaunt, reverent, and mighty, or elles that it is right noble & right cleer by celebritee of renoun? Consider thanne, quod she, as we han graunted her bifore, that he that ne hath nede of nothing, and is most mighty & most digne of honour, yif him nedeth any cleernesse

of renoun, which cleernesse he mighte nat graunten of himself, so that, for lakke of thilke cleernesse, he mighte seme the febler on any syde or the more outcast? **G**lose. This is to seyn, nay; for whoso that is suffisaunt, mighty, & reverent, cleernesse of renoun folweth of the forseide thinges; he hath it al redy of his suffisaunce.

Boece. I may nat, quod I, denye it; but I mot graunte as it is, that this thing beright celebrable by cleernesse of renoun and noblesse.

THANNE folweth it, quod she, that we adden cleernesse of renoun to the three forseide thinges, so that ther ne be amonges hem no difference? This is a consequence, quod I.

THIS thing thanne, quod she, that ne hath nede of no foreine thing, & that may don alle thinges by hise strengthes, and that is noble and honourable, nis nat that a mery thing & a joyful? But whennes, quod I, that any sorwe mighte comen to this thing that is swiche, certes, I may nat thinke.

THANNE moten we graunte, quod she, that this thing be ful of gladnesse, yif the forseide thinges ben sothe; and certes, also mote we graunten that suffisaunce, power, noblesse, reverence, and gladnesse ben only dyverse by names, but hir substaunce hath no diversitee. It mot needly been so, quod I.

LIKE thing thanne, quod she, that is oon & simple in his nature, the wikkednesse of men departeth it and devydeh it; and whan they enforcen hem to geten partye of a thing that ne hath no part, they ne geten hem neither thilke partye that nis non, ne the thing al hool that they ne desire nat. In which manere? quod I.

LIKE man, quod she, that secheth riches to flee povertie, he ne travaileth him nat for to gete power; for he hath levere ben derk and vyl; and eek withdraweth from himself many naturel delyts, for he nolde lese the moneye that he hath assembled. But certes, in this manere he ne geteth him nat suffisaunce that power forleteth, and that molestie prikketh, and that filthe maketh outcast, and that derkenesse hydeth. And certes, he that desireth only power, he wasteth and scattereth riches, and despyseth delyts, & eek honour that is withoute power, ne he ne preyseth glorie nothing. Certes, thus seest thou wel, that manye thinges faylen to him; for he hath somtyme defaute of many necessitees, and many anguissches byten him; and whan he ne may nat don tho defautes away, he forleteth to ben mighty, and that is the thing that he